

REMARKS

This application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office Action dated July 29, 2009. Claims 138 to 140, all of which are independent, are pending in the application. Reconsideration and further examination are respectfully requested.

Claims 138, 139 and 140 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over U.S. Patent No. 4,206,996 (Clark) in view of U.S. 5,270,775 (Suzuki). Reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection are respectfully requested.

The present claims are directed to an information processing system for managing a plurality of output control apparatuses by an information processing apparatus over a network. In one aspect of the invention, each of the output control apparatuses create and maintain their own trouble data and then transmit the trouble data to the information processing apparatus when a predetermined number of print outs have been achieved. The information processing apparatus then selects which output control apparatuses to use based on the trouble counts. In such a system, a technical advantage is achieved in that the information processing system can select peripherals while keeping problems to a minimum.

Turning now to the claims, Claim 138 is directed to a printing system including a plurality of output control apparatuses and an information processing apparatus communicating with the plurality of output control apparatuses via a network. Each output control apparatus comprises a print counting means for counting a print count value indicating a number of prints in response to delivery of a print sheet printed by the printer, first trouble counting means for counting a first trouble count value indicating a number of print troubles of the printer, second trouble counting means for counting a second trouble

count value indicating a number of print troubles which occur until the print count value counted by said print counting means reaches a predetermined value, determination means for determining whether or not the print count value counted by said print counting means reaches the predetermined value, first transmission control means for controlling transmission of trouble data including the second trouble count value counted by said second trouble counting means to the information processing apparatus via the network, without receiving a request for outputting the second trouble count value from the information processing apparatus, if said determination means determines that the print count value counted by said print counting means reaches the predetermined value and a second transmission control means for controlling transmission of status information including consumptive power of the output control apparatus, location of the output control apparatus, function of the output control apparatus and the trouble data, in response to a request for the status information from the information processing apparatus.

The information processing apparatus comprises reception means for receiving the trouble data and the status information from the plurality of output control apparatuses, selection means for selecting one of the plurality of output control apparatuses which has the smallest second trouble count value, based on the trouble data received by said reception means and display control means for displaying the location of the one output control apparatus selected by said selection means based on the status information.

Applicant respectfully submits that the cited references, namely Clark and Suzuki, considered either alone or in combination, fail to disclose or suggest all of the features of the printing system of Claim 138. In particular, the cited references, either

alone or in combination, fail to disclose or suggest at least the features of transmitting trouble data including the second trouble count value counted by the second trouble counting means in the event that the determination means determines that the print count value counted by the print counting means reaches the predetermined value. In addition, the cited references, whether considered alone or in combination, fail to disclose or suggest displaying the location of the one output control apparatus selected by said selection means based on the status information.

In the Office Action, it is conceded that Clark fails to disclose or suggest a transmission control means as featured in the present claims. However, in the Office Action, it is contended that Suzuki discloses such a feature. Applicant respectfully disagrees. Suzuki discloses “(i)n addition, in the light of budgets or the like of the offices, for instance, managing apparatuses capable of collecting all kinds of data A, B, D, N, and X mentioned above are used in the office 1-1 shown in FIG. 2, while managing apparatuses capable of collecting only three kinds of data B, D, and N are used in the office 1-2.” (See Suzuki, column 4, lines 17 to 23.) In addition, Suzuki discloses that the relay apparatus 2 communicates with the host computer and that the computer 30 collects the data A and B from the copying machines 4 in the office, totalizes the number of copies used by specific departments, for example, and effects transfer processing of charges. (See Suzuki, column 5, lines 10 to 14). Therefore, Suzuki discloses that the trouble data is collected from each of the printing apparatuses without regard to the number of pages any of the apparatuses has printed. As such, the printing apparatuses do not transmit the trouble data in the event that it is determined that the print count value counted by the print counting means reaches the predetermined value. Instead, data is collected from the apparatuses irrespective of

how many pages are printed by the apparatuses, and the computer 30 must keep track of the number of printouts of each apparatus.

In addition, the present claims feature a display control means provided in the information processing apparatus. The display control means displays the location of the selected output control apparatus so that the user can readily get printed sheets at the location, even if the selection means automatically performs the selection. Such a feature is not found in either Clark or Suzuki.

Thus, Clark and Suzuki, either alone or in combination, fail to disclose or suggest all of the features of independent Claim 138. In light of this deficiency in Clark and Suzuki, Applicant submits that independent Claim 138 is now in condition for allowance and respectfully requests same.

Independent Claims 139 and 140 are directed to a method and a memory medium, respectively, corresponding to the apparatus of Claim 138. Therefore, Applicant submits that Claims 139 and 140 are also in condition for allowance and such action is respectfully requested.

No other matters being raised, it is believed that the entire application is fully in condition for allowance, and such action is courteously solicited.

CONCLUSION

No claim fees are believed due. However, should it be determined that additional claim fees are required under 37 C.F.R. 1.16 or 1.17, the Director is hereby authorized to charge such fees to Deposit Account 06-1205.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our Costa Mesa, California office at (714) 540-8700. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,

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